

NSC BRIEFING

29 AUGUST 1956

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SOUTHEAST ASIA: #2--CAMBODIA

- I. Crown Prince Sihanouk returned to Phnom Penh last week after a three-months tour of Europe, much of it in Communist countries. He is reported to be more convinced than ever that neutralism is the best policy for Cambodia.
  - A. He has made it clear that he is prepared to accept diplomatic representation from North Vietnam, despite earlier statements to the contrary.
  - B. He is also rumored to be considering a second trip to Peiping
- II. In pursuit of neutralism, Sihanouk has promoted a number of deals with the Bloc.

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- A. The Chinese Communists promised him aid last spring, approximating the US economic assistance program for Cambodia in value, and aimed at influencing the "grass roots" and Cambodia's overseas Chinese population.
  - B. While in Europe, Sihanouk obtained promises of aid, in unspecified amounts, both from the USSR and from some of the Satellites.
  - C. While in Moscow, the Prince confirmed a previous agreement to exchange ambassadors, and subsequently agreed to diplomatic relations with Poland and Czechoslovakia.
- III. Possibly to balance things, Sihanouk--for the first time in several months--has now expressed appreciation for Western assistance, and promised that Americans will be permitted to assist in Cambodian army planning.

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